



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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CONTRACT LET FOR FLORIDA FISHERY RESEARCH

The first contract whereby the Fish and Wildlife Service localizes its activities in carrying out provisions of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act (Public Law 466, 83d Congress) has been let to the University of Miami, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

Under terms of the contract the University will study past and present markets for Florida fish, investigate forces competing with these markets, look into the possibility of expanding present markets and creating new markets, and recommend changes in methods of handling, preserving, packaging, shipping, and selling Florida fish.

The University, which serves as the official fishery research arm of the Florida State Board of Conservation, reports through its Marine Laboratory staff that the Florida fin fisheries are suffering heavily from declining markets. This condition has become so serious that many dealers have ceased operations in recent months, while others are holding on precariously, taking losses in the hope that conditions will improve. In many areas fishing has been greatly curtailed, with fishermen frequently being placed on catch quotas.

Mullet is the chief food fish in Florida's commercial catch, and the market for this species has declined steeply. The markets for grouper, Spanish mackerel, and other Florida species also are on the decline. Through implementation of provisions in the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, the Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to alleviate the situation.

The basic purpose of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act is "to promote the free flow of domestically produced fishery products in commerce." Designed to strengthen the American commercial fishing industry as a whole, the legislation provides that an amount equal to 30 percent of duties collected under the customs laws on fishery products shall be transferred annually for three years from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior. Expenditures for any one year may not exceed \$3,000,000.

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